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**Director of  
Central  
Intelligence**

~~**Top Secret**~~

OCPAS/CIG

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# **National Intelligence Daily**

*Tuesday  
20 September 1983*

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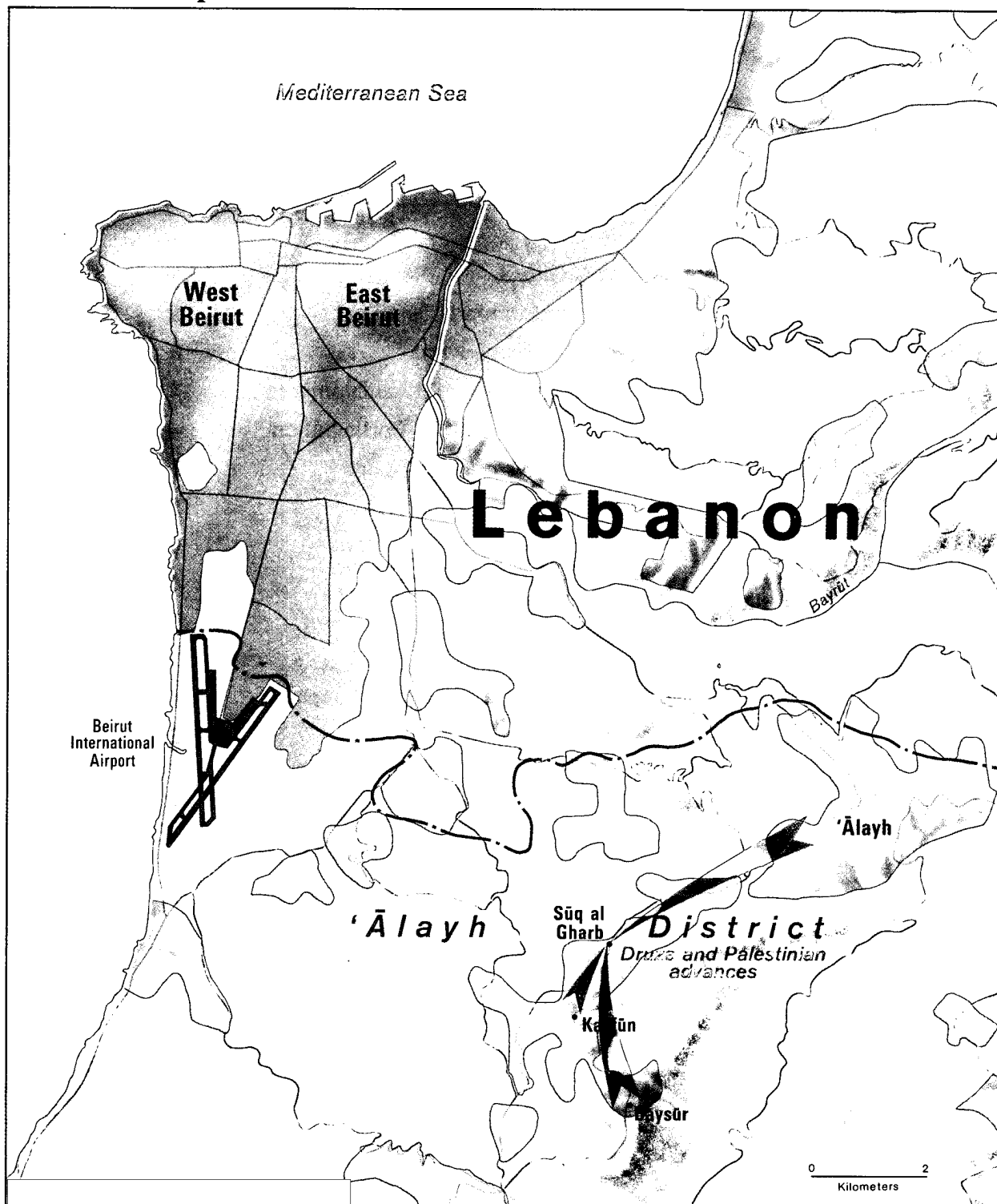
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## Battle for Sūq al Gharb



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**LEBANON: Battle for Suq al Gharb**

*Fighting intensified yesterday as the Lebanese Army tried to defend Suq al Gharb against a three-pronged attack by Druze and Palestinian militias.* [REDACTED]

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The militias launched the attack on Sunday, and fighting continued yesterday. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Druze and Palestinian forces have entered Suq al Gharb several times during the latest battle but that they have been pushed back. The Lebanese Air Force attacked targets in the mountains several times. The temporary airstrip where the aircraft are based came under artillery fire, but it reportedly suffered no damage. [REDACTED]

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Saudi Prince Bandar, who is in Damascus for talks, is cautiously optimistic about prospects for a cease-fire. The latest cease-fire plan does not specifically address the question of Lebanese Army deployments in the Shuf mountains. It calls on all Lebanese parties to participate in a national reconciliation conference, with Saudi and Syrian delegations also attending.

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A TASS statement yesterday warned that Washington will not escape responsibility for its "crimes" in Lebanon and for their international repercussions. [REDACTED]

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**Comment:** Druze and Palestinian militias almost certainly will continue their efforts to capture Suq al Gharb. Bandar has been optimistic before about prospects for a cease-fire, only to have either Syria or Lebanon back off at the last minute. [REDACTED]

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The Lebanese Army hopes to establish control of the northwestern Alayh District and probably anticipates increased US military aid in support of this goal. The Druze and Palestinian militias, on the other hand, would prefer no cease-fire until they can achieve a stronger negotiating position by capturing the high ground at Suq al Gharb. [REDACTED]

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The TASS statement—the second on Lebanon in three weeks—reflects Moscow's growing concern about US actions. The fact that the statement was not issued in the government's name and that it mentions US warnings to Syria only indirectly, however, indicates the regime remains reluctant to commit its prestige. [REDACTED]

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## Range of Super Etendard Aircraft Carrying Exocet Missiles



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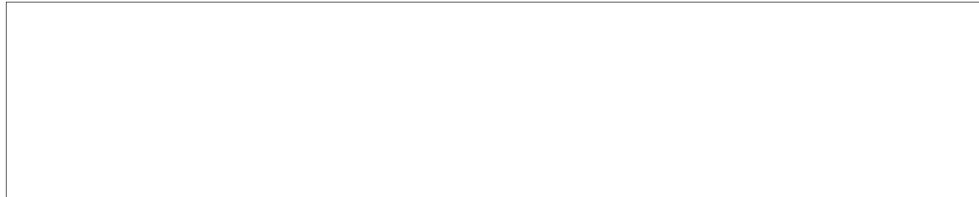
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**FRANCE-IRAQ: Status of Super Etendard Deal**

*Paris apparently remains firm in its intention to complete the sale of Super Etendard fighter-bombers to Iraq, although French Foreign Minister Cheysson's statement yesterday did not include a delivery date for the planes.* [redacted]

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[redacted] Tehran radio yesterday quoted Ayatollah Khomeini as threatening to block the strait if the major powers help Iraq "attack our economic resources." [redacted]

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**Comment:** The delay in the aircraft deliveries—scheduled for last weekend—probably is part of an attempt by France to show good faith to its allies, who have expressed concern that the sale might lead to a wider conflict. Paris is likely to attribute the postponement to technical difficulties or problems in training the Iraqi pilots. [redacted]

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If the French keep delaying the shipment of the aircraft, Iraq will be unable to threaten shipping in the southern half of the Persian Gulf. It could, however, launch attacks against Iran's major oil export facility at Khark Island with the fighter aircraft it already has. [redacted]

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Baghdad probably would not risk retaliating against the French for delays in delivering the Super Etendards because France is still a major arms supplier. Instead, Iraq might focus its anger on the US, suspecting it of influencing the French. [redacted]

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**SURINAME: Challenge by Radical Party**

Prime Minister Alibux told the US Embassy on Friday that he and Army Commander Bouterse had turned aside an effort last week by the radical, pro-Cuban party to gain power. The radicals had argued that Alibux's moderate socialist party has failed to solve Suriname's economic problems. According to Alibux, Bouterse insisted that good relations with Brazil and the US are the cornerstone of Suriname's foreign policy. Alibux claims, however, that his government will fall if he cannot find external financing soon. [ ]

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**Comment:** Alibux apparently hopes to persuade the US to help him acquire a loan from a US bank. The two leftist parties have been contending for power for some time, and, unless the economic decline is reversed soon, Bouterse may turn from Alibux's party and install a new cabinet. The traditional Surinamese parties might be unwilling to work with Bouterse, allowing the radicals to attain power by default. Although Bouterse is encouraging the moderates to develop relations with Brazil, he could be influenced by the radicals to turn again to Cuba as his best source of aid and security support. [ ]

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**USSR-AFGHANISTAN-PAKISTAN: Airspace Violations**

Soviet or Afghan aircraft yesterday again violated Pakistani airspace near Parachinar, but no attacks were reported. Pakistani officials say that on Sunday MIG-21 fighters from Afghanistan bombed two villages in the same area, causing seven civilian casualties. Islamabad has protested to Kabul and the UN. [REDACTED]

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**Comment:** The Afghan Army is conducting counterinsurgency operations in neighboring Paktia Province that could have spilled across the border, but the unusual depth of the airspace violations—up to 37 kilometers—suggests they were deliberate. The Soviets may be trying to put pressure on Islamabad to curtail the flow of arms to Afghan insurgents. Moscow may believe President Zia is particularly vulnerable to such tactics now, when he is preoccupied with antigovernment disturbances in Sind Province. In the past, however, airspace violations have served to strengthen Zia's domestic and foreign support. [REDACTED]

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**COSTA RICA: Spanish Terrorist Captured**

A member of the Basque terrorist ETA group was arrested last week in San Jose, according to the US Embassy. The terrorist, who has been linked to at least six bombings in Spain, reportedly had been ordered by ETA to monitor the movements of anti-Sandinista insurgent leader Eden Pastora. Press accounts state that the terrorist may be part of a group of 12 who entered the country via Nicaragua.



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**Comment:** The Nicaraguans may be using Basque terrorists to try to kill Pastora because they would be less well known to Costa Rican security forces. The arrest is likely to damage Sandinista relations with Spain as well as with Costa Rica, particularly if Nicaraguan support for ETA operations can be established.

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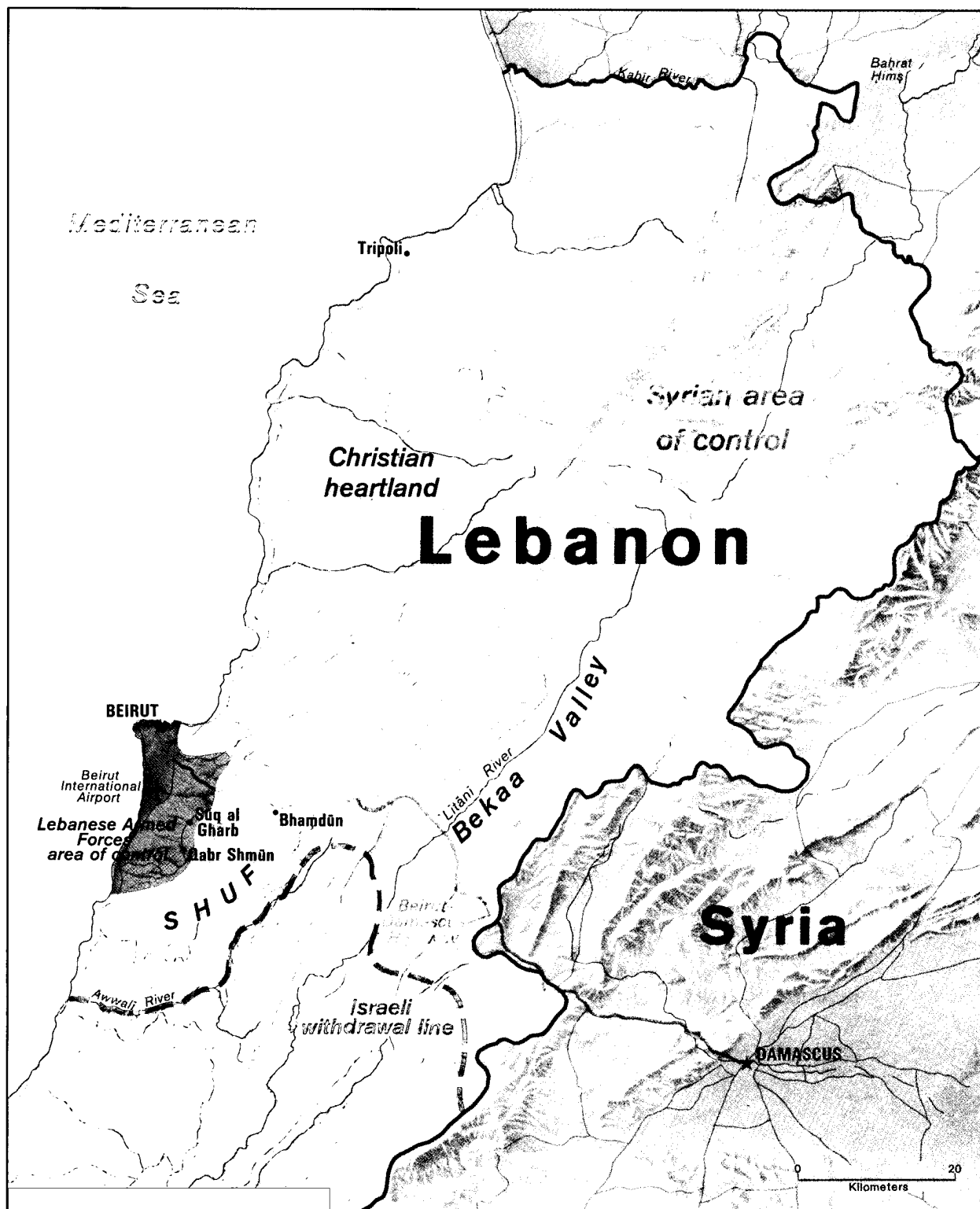
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## **Special Analysis**

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### **PLO-LEBANON: New Role for Palestinians**

*Participation in the fighting in the Shuf offers the PLO a chance to expand its armed presence in central and southern Lebanon and increase its influence in Lebanese politics. Despite PLO chief Arafat's well-publicized return to Tripoli, Syria will largely determine the Palestinian military and political role in Lebanon. The Israelis, who doubt that the forces of Druze leader Junblatt will be able to prevent Palestinian attacks on Israeli positions in southern Lebanon, may try to install pro-Israeli Druze just north of the Awwali River. In time they also may undertake limited military action against Palestinian fighters in the Shuf.*

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Palestinian participation serves the PLO's immediate tactical goals and its broader political interests. The fighting weakens the Christian-dominated government and helps prevent the Phalange from extending its authority beyond the Christian heartland. A government preoccupied with its own survival is less likely to challenge the PLO presence in Lebanon.

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The Palestinians are looking for opportunities to establish a permanent presence in the Shuf as a base from which to attack Israeli positions in the south. They also want to increase their presence in Beirut.

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By reestablishing political and military links to the Lebanese Muslim community, PLO leaders can again claim that a PLO presence also serves the interests of Lebanese Muslims. The Palestinians seek enough leverage to demand that the question of their status be dealt with as a core issue in any attempt to resolve Lebanon's internal strife. Barring an unlikely settlement of the conflict in Lebanon that

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provides for the withdrawal of all foreign forces, the Palestinians will demand formal recognition of their right to remain in the country and government protection of Palestinian civilians from harassment by Christian forces. [REDACTED]

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### **Syria's Role**

The bulk of the forces involved in the fighting are pro-Syrian. Syria will largely determine the nature and level of PLO participation. [REDACTED]

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Although Arafat and Assad are acting in tandem in the Shuf, Assad almost certainly remains determined to keep Arafat in check and appears to have the political and military leverage to succeed. Clashes between Arafat's forces and the pro-Syrian Fatah rebels have continued in the Bekaa Valley even as they cooperate in fighting the Lebanese Army. [REDACTED]

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Assad probably will capitalize on Druze reluctance to allow the PLO an area of exclusive control in the Shuf to keep the Palestinians in check. He realizes that PLO control of such an enclave might eventually allow PLO leaders to acquire a greater measure of political independence from Damascus. The presence of pro-Syrian Palestinians in the Shuf, on the other hand, gives Assad additional insurance against the possibility that Junblatt might consider a separate deal with Beirut. [REDACTED]

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The Syrian leader's potential to assist a Palestinian return to Beirut allows him to put more pressure on President Gemayel to accept Druze and Syrian demands. If Assad decides to expand military activity beyond the Shuf, however, he probably will try first to use mainly Shia forces to provoke clashes in West Beirut. [REDACTED]

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### **Israeli Concerns**

The Druze cooperation with PLO fighters has upset Israeli efforts to cultivate good relations with both the Druze and Christian communities. [REDACTED]

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Tel Aviv probably still hopes to find Druze who will support an Israeli effort to prevent Palestinian infiltration. The Druze community is unlikely to split over the Palestinian question, however, or to act against the Palestinians so long as the conflict with the Lebanese Army continues. [ ]

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For now, the Israelis are likely to deal with the Palestinians by aggressively patrolling their Awwali River line. They have sent tank columns at least 10 kilometers north of the Awwali in recent days in a show of force. They also may conduct artillery fire and airstrikes against selected PLO targets. [ ]

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There is little the Israelis can do to prevent Palestinian reinfiltration, however, short of again physically occupying the Shuf. [ ]

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### **Regional Implications**

The willingness of the Palestinians to act so openly as military surrogates for Syria has broad implications beyond Lebanon. It probably will revive concerns of the moderate Arab states that they may face a radicalized PLO backed by Syria that is as willing to undermine their regimes as it is to battle Israel. The implied threat that Syria could instigate PLO terrorism against the moderates will contribute to their reluctance to stand up to Syria on other key Middle East issues. [ ]

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